

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 IO-14 AEC-11 ACDA-19 SCI-06 FEAE-00 DRC-01

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1663

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION NATO

USCINCEUR

USNMR SHAPE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 19895

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: FR, MILI, MNUC, NATO' NAC

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER CHIRAC REAFFIRMS THE NEED FOR
AN INDEPENDENT FRENCH NUCLEAR FORCE

SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER CHIRAC'S STRONG ENDORSEMENT OF
FRANCE'S INDEPENDENT NUCLEAR FORCE, COMING NOT LONG
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AFTER GISCARD'S DETAILED REVIEW OF DEFENSE MATTERS,

INDICATES THAT THIS TRADITIONAL GAULLIST POLICY WILL BE
GIVEN CONTINUED HIGH PRIORITY IN FRENCH DEFENSE PLANNING.
END SUMMARY.

1. SPEAKING IN ST. RAPHAEL AUGUST 15 AT CEREMONIES
COMMEMORATING THE THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ALLIED
LANDINGS IN PROVENCE, PRIME MINISTER JACQUES CHIRAC
RESTATED FRANCE'S DETERMINATION TO MAINTAIN A
"FORCE DE DISSUASION", WHICH HE CALLED ESSENTIAL TO THE
INDEPENDENCE OF FRANCE AND OF EUROPE. THE ONLY WAY A
PEACEFUL STATE CAN WIN A WAR IN THE NUCLEAR AGE, HE
EXPLAINED, IS BY POSSESSING A FORCE SUFFICIENT TO
DISSUADE A WOULD-BE ADVERSARY. FRANCE MAINTAINS SUCH
A FORCE, AND "THE MOST IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION OF FRANCE
TO THE INDEPENDENCE OF EUROPE," HE WENT ON, IS THE
WILL TO MAINTAIN "THE INDEPENDENCE OF FRANCE." "FRANCE,"
HE CONCLUDED, "WILL ASSUME IN ALL ITS CONSEQUENCES ITS
RESPONSIBILITY OF INDEPENDENT POWER."

2. CHIRAC'S TRADITIONAL ARGUMENT FOR FRANCE'S "FORCE
DE DISSUASION" IS THE FIRST MAJOR DEFENSE PRONOUNCEMENT

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FROM A HIGH GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL SINCE THE CLOSE OF
PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING'S "WEEK OF REFLECTION" ON
DEFENSE MATTERS ABOUT TWO WEEKS AGO. CHIRAC SIMILARLY
PRAISED THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NUCLEAR FORCE IN A
SPEECH AT SAUMUR JULY 29, AS GISCARD BEGAN ABOUT TEN DAYS
OF CONFERENCES WITH HIS TOP GENERALS AND CIVILIAN DE-
FENSE EXPERTS. DESPITE WIDE MEDIA COMMENT, GISCARD
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AND HIS CONFIDANTS REMAIN TIGHT-LIPPED ABOUT THE
CONCLUSIONS OF THIS REVIEW AND RESULTS ARE NOT LIKELY
TO BE KNOWN UNTIL THE GOVERNMENT PRESENTS ITS 1975
DEFENSE BUDGET IN THE FALL.

3. NEITHER GISCARD NOR DEFENSE MINISTER JACQUES SOUFFLET
HAS SAID MUCH ABOUT DEFENSE SINCE THE NEW GOVERNMENT
TOOK POWER IN MAY. DEFENSE WAS NOT A MAJOR ISSUE IN
THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN; UNITED LEFT CANDIDATE
FRANCOIS MITTERRAND EVEN PLEDGED TO MAINTAIN THE ONCE-
CONTROVERSIAL NUCLEAR FORCE. CHIRAC -- GRADUATE OF
THE FAMED SAUMUR CAVALRY SCHOOL, VETERAN OF ALGERIA,
AND THE LEADING GAULLIST IN A GOVERNMENT WHICH MUST
DEPEND UPON THE VOTES OF 174 GAULLIST DEPUTIES -- HAS
EMERGED AS THE GOVERNMENT'S PRINCIPAL DEFENSE SPOKESMAN.
FRANCE'S DEFENSE PLANNERS MUST RESOLVE SOME BIG
PROBLEMS: RISING COSTS, DECLINING MORALE IN THE ARMED
FORCES, THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PLUTON MISSILE STRATEGY
ACCEPTABLE TO THE FRG, THE DEGREE OF MILITARY
COOPERATION WITH HER NATO ALLIES, LENGTH OF SERVICE
FOR DRAFTEES (GAULLIST SECRETARY-GENERAL SANGUINETTI'S
TRIAL BALLOON THAT NATIONAL SERVICE COULD BE REDUCED
FROM TWELVE TO SIX MONTHS WAS DEFLATED BY SOUFFLET, WHO
SAID AUGUST 14 THAT SUCH A REDUCTION WAS NOT POSSIBLE
"FOR THE MOMENT"). BUT CHIRAC'S RINGING ENDORSEMENT OF

AN INDEPENDENT FRENCH DEFENSE POLICY BASED ON A
NUCLEAR "FORCE DE DISSUASION" STRONGLY SUGGESTS THAT
THIS PILLAR OF GAULLIST POLICY WILL REMAIN A FOUNDATION
OF THE GISCARDIAN EDIFICE.
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